

# crops review

## general

The 2003 crop year was characterized by cooler than normal temperatures and prolonged precipitation. Winter brought several significant snowfalls, including one storm that dumped over 22 inches on the State. While warmer spring temperatures gradually melted the snow, spring rains continued causing planting delays and developmental problems for small grains. Because of the excessive moisture, wheat yields were the lowest since 1979. Many fields remained too wet to plant corn and soybeans or to cut good quality hay. By late summer, the rains finally stopped, enabling fields to dry so that corn and soybean harvest was possible.

## corn

Excessive rains in the spring and summer hampered corn planting. Near constant rain washed out planted seed and prevented significant acreage from being planted. October finally brought drier weather so the corn harvest was ultimately delayed by only a few weeks. Corn acreage harvested was down 3.5 percent from 2002, however the rains benefited yield with the 2003 crop averaging 123 bushels per acre, comparable to the 2001 season. Production totaled 50.4 million bushels, up 60 percent from 2002, when drought plagued the state. The average price for corn in 2003 was \$2.75 per bushel, down 3.5 percent from 2002. Cash receipts totaled \$138.7 million, 51 percent above 2002.

## small grains

The 2003 crop season was one of the worst ever for small grains. Continuing rain from the fall of 2002 through late summer 2003 caused flooding and disease. Winter wheat planted was down 11 percent from 2002 to 165,000 acres planted. Wheat was also plagued by wheat scab. Wet fields delayed harvest with harvest continuing into August. Winter wheat yields averaged 37 bushels per acre, the lowest since 1979. Total production was 5.4 million bushels with value of production \$16.9 million. Barley acres planted were up slightly from 43,000 acres in 2002 to 45,000 acres. Yield averaged 57 bushels per acre, down from 82 bushels in 2002 and the value of production totaled \$3.9 million, down 17 percent from 2002.

## soybeans

Wet spring weather prevented or delayed soybean planting. Planted acreage dropped 11 percent from 2002 to 435,000 acres. Fields dried in time for harvest and the yields were up significantly from 2002 to an average 37 bushels per acre harvested from 430,000 acres. Total soybean production was 15.9 million bushels, a 47 percent increase from 2002. The season average price was the fourth highest on record at \$7.25 per bushel. Cash receipts for soybeans were \$115 million, an 87 percent increase from 2002.

## hay

Weather conditions for hay were not optimal in 2003. Frequent rains did not allow enough time for cut hay to dry. Farmers were only able to cut 195,000 acres, the lowest number of harvested acres on record and 25,000 acres less than in 2002. Average yields were above 2002 and rose from 2.39 tons per acre to 2.76 tons per acre. Total hay production was 539,000 tons, 2.5 percent above 2002. Alfalfa hay acreage was down 15,000 acres from 2002 to 45,000 acres. Average yield for alfalfa was 3.3 tons per acre, up 14 percent from 2002. Total alfalfa production was 149,000 tons, 14 percent below 2002.